

REMARKS

Reconsideration of claims 1, 5, 7, 9-13, 15, 25, 26, 29, 36-38, 41 and 44-56 is respectfully requested. Claims 1, 5, 7, 9-11, 13, 15, 25, 26, 29, 37, 38, 41, 44-47, 49, 51, 53 and 55 are amended. Claims 2-4, 6, 8, 14, 16-24, 27, 28, 30-35, 39, 40, 42 and 43 are canceled. Consideration of new claims 57-61 is respectfully requested. The new claims are supported in-part by the data of Table 2 and Table 3.

The rejection of claims 1-56 under 35 U.S.C. 103 (a) as unpatentable over Wrue et al. (US 6,143,210) is respectfully traversed with respect to the amended claims. As stated in the Official Action, Wrue describes applying a vacuum nozzle to a surface of the lens to hold the lens in place. The vacuum nozzle as well as the adhered lens is then moved in a direction "normal to and away from the mold" thereby separating the lens from the mold. In other words, the lens is moved upwards in the z-direction away from the mold portion. Wrue also describes a mold configuration in which a mold portion 20 can "slightly rock on pin [mold portion] 32". The applied vacuum pulls upward on lens 11 and the rocking movement of the mold portion 20 facilitates the release of the lens from the mold 20.

The examiner maintains that this "rocking motion would certainly impose force components between the lens and the mold in the x and y directions -i.e., in a first linear direction and a second linear direction", and thus concludes that the claimed method is obvious over this rocking motion. Official Action, June 23, 2006, page 2. Also, the examiner maintains that movement (alleged x-y translation) of the rocking mold portion is obvious over moving the lens with respect to a fully secured mold portion because what is important here is that the "two [lens and mold] would be moved relatively with respect to each other". Final Office Action, page 2. Applicants respectfully disagree for the following reasons.

As stated in the application beginning at page 4, last paragraph, the applicants performed the claimed methods of removing hydrated contact lenses from mold portions using a lens assembly that included "a metallic belt with nubs over which a mold is placed with enough clearance [between the mold and nub] to sway [the mold] in conjunction with the imparting x and y movements of the robot [pick-up device]." In

other words, applicants used a non-fixed nub/mold assembly very similar to the assembly described in Wrue et al. to test the claimed methods. This test procedure is described in the application beginning at page 6, line 7 and is summarized below.

The data within the application itself strongly indicates that claimed method steps of moving the lens in a first and second linear direction is something quite different than any alleged tangential movement that may occur in the nub/mold assembly described in Wrue. Using a "rocking" nub/mold assembly, applicants observed that when they attempted to pick up bifocal, hydrated contact lenses using a conventional, straight pick-up of the lens with a conventional vacuum nozzle as described in Wrue, the pick yields were very poor, this is, in the range of 66% to 70%. In fact, bifocal lenses with a sku of greater than -3.0D, e.g., a lens of -6.0D, had pick yields less than 60%. As a control, applications used non-bifocal contact lenses with a sku of -3.0D, and by using a conventional straight pick-up procedure the pick yields were near 98.4%. Obviously, the conventional straight pick-up was sufficient for non-bifocal contact lenses but for some reason the bifocal contact lenses having the same sku of -3.0D had much lower pick-up yields.

The claimed methods of imparting an x and y translation to the pick-up device, and thus to the lens, increased the pick-up yields for the -3.0 sku bifocal lenses from about 66% to greater than about 85%. Accordingly, about 30% more of the bifocal contact lenses are able to be picked up by the device and transferred to the next manufacturing step. That is a lot of contact lenses that otherwise would be directed to the discard bin. Again, applicants point out that this data was obtained on a nub/mold assembly much like that described in Wrue, that is, the mold could move (rotate) with respect to the nub.

For the reasons stated, applicants respectfully submit that the "application of forces to move the lens and mold in a relative tangential manner [to] improve the [pick] yield of lenses," particularly bifocal lenses, would not be an obvious parameter in light of the teachings of Wrue. *See*, Final Office Action, page 2. Accordingly, applicants respectfully request that the rejection be withdrawn.

A favorable action in the form of a Notice of Allowance is respectfully requested.

Please charge all fees that are due with this Amendment to Deposit Account No.
02-1425 under Attorney Docket No. P03118.

Respectfully submitted,



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